

Greetings!

Welcome to the January, 2015 edition of **The Northern Connection**, quarterly e-news from the Northern Region Office, Wisconsin Department of Administration. The format is short bits of information, with links to details for those who want to learn more. Please feel free to share specific information, or this entire e-news, with your colleagues & those you serve.

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## **The Northern Connection**

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### **NEWS FLASH!!! Free Fishing Weekend - January 17-18, 2015**

Bundle up and get out there for Wisconsin's Winter Free Fishing Weekend, January 17 - 18, 2015. Residents and nonresidents are welcome!

Fish anywhere in Wisconsin without a license or trout stamp on Free Fishing Weekend. This includes all inland waters and Wisconsin's side of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River. Learn all about it at:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/anglereducation/freefishingweekend.html>

### **Chambers of Commerce & Economic Development Corporations – Help Spread the Word!**

Please consider sharing the following three items with your members.

#### **\$3 million Available for Wisconsin Fast Forward School-to-Work Grants**

Up to \$3 million will be available for innovative high school pupil worker training grant applications through Round 2 of Governor Walker's [Wisconsin Fast Forward](#) – [Blueprint for Prosperity](#) initiative.

Wisconsin businesses are encouraged to submit applications for employer-driven workforce programs to train, certify and hire high school students for work in high demand fields in partnership with school districts, educational partners and/or technical colleges. **Grant application deadline is February 2, 2015.**

Wisconsin Fast Forward is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development – Office of Skills Development. To access the High School Pupil Worker Training Grant announcement and application, visit [www.WisconsinFastForward.com/prosperity/pupil/](http://www.WisconsinFastForward.com/prosperity/pupil/) or send an e-mail to [WFFHSPupil@dwd.wisconsin.gov](mailto:WFFHSPupil@dwd.wisconsin.gov).

#### **Nomination Deadlines for Governor's Export Awards is Jan. 30**

Northern Wisconsin companies of all sizes and all industries are invited to apply for the 2015 Governor's Export Achievement Award, which recognizes businesses that have achieved extraordinary results in international markets. The awards program has been revamped this year and is easier to enter than ever before. All companies need to do get started is visit [inwisconsin.com/exportawards](http://inwisconsin.com/exportawards) and describe—in 250 words or less—their recent exporting accomplishments. The **deadline for the initial submission is 5 p.m. Jan. 30**. Last year's winners were Winsert Inc. of Marinette, and Red Arrow International of Manitowoc and Rhinelander.

For more details or to complete a nomination form, visit [inwisconsin.com/exportawards](http://inwisconsin.com/exportawards) or contact Patrick Roetker at [Patrick.roetker@wedc.org](mailto:Patrick.roetker@wedc.org).

#### **DOA Office of Business Development – “The concierge service for business in Wisconsin”**

The Department of Administration Office of Business Development (OBD) is your business advocate working within state government to help answer questions, as well as suggest administrative rule changes on your behalf. The number one goal of OBD is to help make Wisconsin a better place to do business and it starts with getting to know you.

OBD Co-directors Joe Knilans and Nancy Mistele work with business owners, trade associations, and Chambers of Commerce throughout Wisconsin to ensure business has a voice in working with State government. They can help cut through the red tape of government and remove antiquated and unnecessary regulations that pose a threat to creating new jobs. To learn more, or arrange a visit with Nancy or Joe, check

<http://www.doa.state.wi.us/Divisions/Office-of-Business-Development/OBD> or email at [DOAOBD@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DOAOBD@wisconsin.gov)

### **Attention Municipalities – Community Development Block Grant news**

A new year means a new annual funding cycle for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Planning Program and Public Facilities Program. Check the CDBG website at <http://www.doa.state.wi.us/Divisions/Housing/Bureau-of-Community-Development> at the *end of February* for application information. Regional trainings will be held in March. Funds for Community Development Block Grants come from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and are managed in Wisconsin by the Department of Administration, Division of Housing.

### **Motorists – Move Over! It's the law!**

Wisconsin's Move Over Law provides a safety zone for workers on the side of roadways. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is working to promote awareness of this law, which requires drivers to shift lanes if possible or at least slow down when encountering a law enforcement vehicle, ambulance, fire truck, tow truck, highway maintenance vehicle or utility vehicle that is stopped on the side of a road with its warning lights flashing. By obeying the Move Over Law, drivers can protect themselves, their passengers, law enforcement officers and others who work on highways from serious injuries and deaths. More details, including a link to a short, real-life dashboard camera video, are on WisDOT's web site at <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/news/law/index.htm>.

### **New report shows DMV wait times are down, online services are up**

A new report from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation shatters the myth that service at the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is slow. The report shows the majority of people who visit a Wisconsin DMV customer service center are served in less than 10 minutes, phone contacts are handled in under two minutes and there is immediate service for customers who do business online. To read the complete report, click [here](#). Access DMV services 24/7 on the web at <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/online.htm>.

### **Tax season resources from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue**

April 15<sup>th</sup> will be here before we know it! The Wisconsin Department of Revenue is prepared to help.

- Forms and instructions for individuals, local governments, and businesses are available on DOR's website. Visit DOR's "Forms" page for more information by clicking [here](#).
- For a step-by-step guide to filing your tax return electronically, click [here](#).
- The Income Tax customer service number at DOR is (608)266-2772.

### **Wisconsin Veterans & Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit**

The *Wisconsin Veterans & Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit* provides eligible veterans and unremarried, surviving spouses a refundable property tax credit for their primary, in-state residence.

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs verifies the veteran's eligibility for the program. The credit is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue through the state income tax return.

The definitions of an **eligible veteran** and an **eligible unremarried surviving spouse** are *expanded* and the **age requirement was eliminated**.

Applicants who believe they may qualify should contact their local County Veterans Service Office (CVSO). A list of CVSOs and contact information can be found at [www.WisVets.com/CVSO](http://www.WisVets.com/CVSO).

For program information, applications and instructions on how to apply, see brochure [WDVA B0106](#). Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on this credit are available from the [Department of Revenue](#) website.

### **DNR Forest Products Services Program**

The Forest Products Services program provides resources and technical support to Wisconsin's forest products industry sectors. Staff can assist your firm by providing business and market development, technology transfer, resource data support and training. The program offers many services to help support and grow your company. For example, program specialists can help you improve your bottom line by conducting process improvement studies, providing available grant opportunities or sharing marketing strategies.

In addition to providing assistance to individual companies, the program supports the forest industry at large. Staff work closely with state and federal entities, as well as economic development professionals, to improve the

business climate for the forest industry in Wisconsin. The Forest Products Services program manages the Wisconsin Wood-Using Directory and also publishes the Wisconsin Wood Marketing Bulletin, a quarterly newsletter highlighting utilization and marketing efforts in Wisconsin.

To get in touch with one of the Forest Products Services specialists in your area, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestBusinesses/staff.html>

### **Love to catch fish? Love to eat fish?**

Then you need to know about the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility located in Red Cliff!

The mission for the UWSP-NADF is to promote sustainable aquaculture by promoting public education and advancing the discovery, dissemination and application of knowledge for sustainable aquaculture in a northern climate. One of the many projects the facility is involved in is the [WI Walleye Initiative](#). Facility staff is working closely with two local fish farms on rearing walleye for their Wisconsin Walleye Initiative projects. By providing technical assistance and fish, the UWSP-NADF is partnering to make these projects a success for Wisconsin anglers. The facility has also provided over 10,000 extended walleye fingerlings to a local farm and 1,500 fingerlings to the Red Cliff Tribal Fish Hatchery this past fall. Learn more about the facility, current projects and available resources at [aquaculture.uwsp.edu](http://aquaculture.uwsp.edu). Come visit the facility for a tour between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm or contact Emma Wiermaa, Outreach Specialist at [ewiermaa@uwsp.edu](mailto:ewiermaa@uwsp.edu) to make arrangements for a group tour.

### **Guest Column – Department of Natural Resources**

#### **DNR: Our services include economic development and job creation**

John Gozdziński, DNR Secretary's Director of Northern Wisconsin

A comprehensive plan and good communication are key to any endeavor, from planning your annual deer hunt to developing a business plan.

Many of you know Department of Natural Resources offices are the place to go to get answers to your outdoor questions and pick up fishing and hunting licenses. Yes, we are here to provide these services and protect our precious natural resources and people, but we are also here to help facilitate job creation and economic development.

One of our top priorities is to be more efficient and effective in working with you on economic development in the north and across the state. So please, involve us at the beginning of your economic development plan or project so we can provide the people and resources to determine what, if any, permits are needed. We are here to work as partners in charting a successful path forward.

A couple of years ago, the agency established the Office of Business Support and Sustainability. The office focuses on 11 of our most important business sectors. For each sector we have designated one key staff person as a point of contact within DNR. Teams of DNR staff are charged with providing specialized support for their respective sectors – to walk in the shoes of these businesses, listen to business needs and understand sector trends. Learn more at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Sectors/>

We also have [small business specialists](#) who can provide assistance with our streamlined permitting process, including E-permits. And, of course, our toll-free help number is available to you seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. by calling 1-888-WDNRINFO (1-888-936-7463).

Environmental protections are in no way ignored or sidestepped, but by working together upfront, we can achieve better environmental outcomes. We are excited about the changes we have made and are continuing to make. We look forward to working with you in the days, weeks, months and years to come.

### **Northern Region Office 101**

The role of the Office is to be a connection point between communities in Northern Wisconsin and the resources of state government. If you are looking for information, have a suggestion or need assistance with problem resolution with a state agency, please contact me at [MaryAnnT.Lippert@wisconsin.gov](mailto:MaryAnnT.Lippert@wisconsin.gov). I travel throughout the 40 county region north of U.S. Highway 10 and can be available, with 3 to 4 weeks notice, to attend your meetings and events. Keep in touch!